Double Weave Selvages

You may have noticed double weave selvages appearing on work by Erica and Betty over the last year or so. I certainly noticed them as they appear as perfect, beautiful edges. I recently finished a couple of pieces using this technique and thought I would share it with you.

There are two conditions that must be present to be able to execute double weave selvages. They are: 1) you must have four shafts dedicated to the selvages and 2) you must be doing a twill pattern in the main body of the piece.

This means that if you have 4 shafts on your loom you cannot do it. If you have 8 shafts, you must do a 4-shaft (twill) pattern for the body of the weaving and use 4 for the borders. Since I am a 4/8 shaft weaver, I won't talk about how to do it if you have a zillion shafts—for that you'll have to talk to Erica or Betty (and I'm sorry if I've left out anyone else who is doing this with a zillion shafts).

Your double weave ends will be threaded at least double the density of the body of the piece. Here is how I did this piece.

The scarf is a straight twill (4,3,2,1) at 30 ends per inch (2 ends of 8/2 tencel per dent in a 15 dent reed). For the selvages, I added 16 ends on each side, threaded straight twill (5,6,7,8) at 60 ends per inch. (8/2 tencel in a 15 dent reed = 4 ends per dent, and yes, they fit.)

The tie-up and treadling look like this:

			8
	7	7	7
	6		
5	5		
		4	4
	3	3	
2	2		
1			1
			4
		3	
	2		
1			

You will note that shafts 5 through 8 will always be active and will weave only the selvages, while shafts 1 through 4 are occupied with the body of the scarf. I normally use floating selvages when weaving twill, they are not needed here (and would probably not work). Also note that you will build muscle in your left leg treadling this pattern as treadle 2 lifts 5 shafts.

I believe it is possible to do this selvage technique with other weaves, but I have not "gone there". The goal of this article is to share my discovery, for more complex issues, I defer to Erica, Betty, and anyone else who is doing this.

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